

## Teen-Agers Consider . . .

## NATION'S INTERESTS vs. FREE SPEECH

By EUGENE GILBERT

Gilbert Youth Research Co.

With Khrushchev pounding the table only recently at the United Nations, the time seems ripe for finding out what the Nation's teen-agers think of the whole subject of free speech.

As a broad generalization, one can say that by no means do they give it unanimous or unqualified support—something that doubtless would curl the hair of old time theoreticians on democracy.

The United Nations, of course, prescribes its own rules of behavior, but how about the United States? Should we allow the constitutional guarantees of free speech contained in the First Amendment to intrude on our patience and perhaps even our national security?

To determine how far teenagers would be willing to go in extending free speech to various pressure groups and unpopular shades of opinion, our interviews across the country asked five key questions:

Do you think the Communists should be allowed free speech?

Do you think that Nazis should be allowed free speech?

Do you think the Socialists should be allowed free speech?

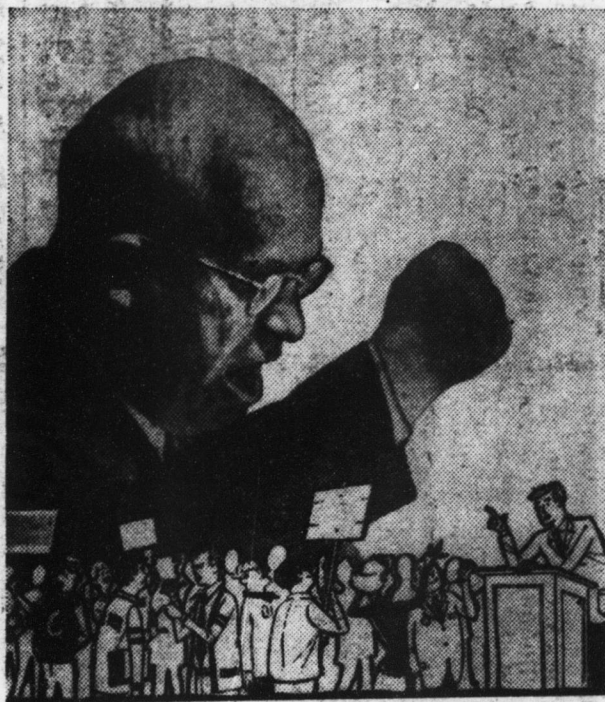
Should anyone be allowed to advocate peaceful revolution?

The answers were as surprising as they were revealing.

More youngsters today (69 per cent) would deny free speech to Socialists than would to Nazis (54 per cent). And more would deny it to Nazis than they would to Communists (47 per cent).

Except where the Socialists were concerned, girls turned out to be far more tolerant than boys in allowing free speech. For instance, 63 per cent of the girls would allow the Communists free speech, compared with 42 per cent of the boys. Female tolerance slipped to 42 per cent where the Nazis were concerned, but male tolerance dropped all the way to 24 per cent. And both boys (68 per cent) and girls (70 per cent) were pretty emphatic about not allowing free speech to Socialists.

Most of those in favor of granting free speech



privileges to Communists, Nazis and Socialists cited pretty much the same reason, best summed up by 14-year-old Carol Baldwin of King of Prussia, Pa.:

"If we want a free world, we must have free speech."

Those on Carol's side of the argument cited the First Amendment, insisted that free speech no matter how unpopular was essential to a democracy and warned of the dangers of tampering with the ideals that underlie the founding of our country.

Those opposed varied in opinion, depending on which group—Communists, Nazis or Socialists—they were discussing.

Here are some typical replies on denying Communists free speech:

"Freedom is not license. It doesn't allow traitorism."—Lee Saperstein, Elmhurst, N. Y.

"They're capable of changing public opinion by twisting meanings."—Jay Green, 16, Indianapolis.

"They fill people's heads with lies."—Jon Aldrich, 14, LaCrosse, Wis.

On denying Nazis free speech:

"It could incite riots."—David Lazer, 17, New York.

"They preach hatred and destruction."—Dan Nussbaum, 16, Hancock, N. Y.

"They aren't idealists, they're murdering psychos."—Abigail Quart, Bayside, N. Y.

On denying Socialists free speech:

"America is fine just the way it is."—Joan Desposito, Brooklyn, N. Y.

"They just don't know what they're doing. No responsibility."—Skippy Kennener, 17, New York City.

When it came to allowing people and groups to advocate peaceful revolution, a tight majority (52 per cent) of the teen-agers were willing to go along, with the girls swinging the balance against the boys.

"If we didn't allow people to advocate peaceful revolution," warned 17-year-old Constance Pryde of Verona, N. J., "there would only be the remnants of a democracy left." Her remark pretty much summed up for the majority.

Speaking with the opposition, 15-year-old Holly Williams of Clarks Green, Pa., observed that most revolutions have a habit of "turning out to be not so peaceful."

An overwhelming majority of both boys (86 per cent) and girls (75 per cent) turned thumbs down on armed revolutions.

"This automatically implies force and persecution," commented Estella Spear, 18, of Verona, N. J. "It is per se a violation of our beliefs in freedom."

"You can't have both democracy and anarchy," added 17-year-old David Lazer of New York City.

Among the few who would allow groups or individuals to advocate armed revolution was Gloria Leschew, 14, of Queens Village, N. Y. Her argument, cited by several others, was that such action "might be good for the people."

## Mrs. Ricker's Mail . . .

## HOW TEENS SHOULD ACT AT A DRIVE-IN

By DOROTHY RICKER

Register-Tribune Syndicate

Dear Mrs. Ricker:

Some of my friends and I have been discussing what is proper conduct at drive-in theaters. We would like to know what you think. I've gone to drive-ins several times on dates and it seems that most of the boys think it should be a night of necking.

Some of the girls do, too. Could you write a column about teen conduct in public places, especially drive-ins? I wish you would also include some tips on manners and conversation. Thanks loads.

NYDA.

Most teens already know what is considered proper conduct in public places such as stores, theaters, dances, downtown streets. However, for those who have doubts, let's review a few "don'ts." Don't act boisterous, don't talk loud, don't jostle and "horse" around, don't do things to annoy others, don't neck, don't show off, don't try to draw attention to yourself, don't chew gum. As you can see, all this adds up to the over-all rule for proper conduct for people of all ages; they should behave as ladies and gentlemen.

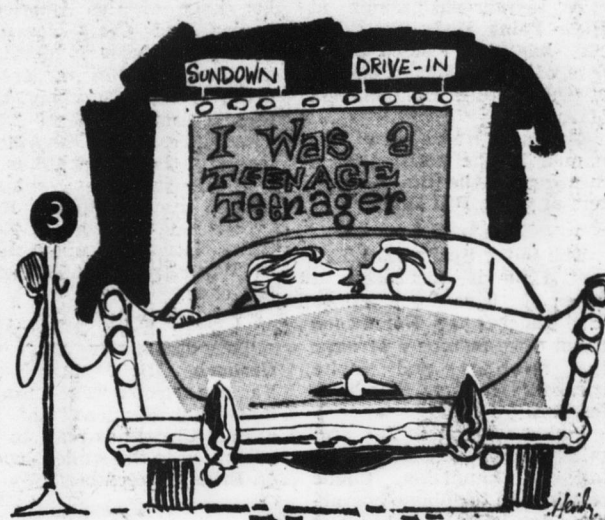
Any intelligent teen knows that necking all evening is wrong but, unfortunately, some youngsters like those you mentioned, misbehave and are responsible for drive-in theaters being tagged "passion-pits" and various other unsavory names.

As a result many parents are against drive-in dates. But I believe boys or girls who misbehave at a drive-in also will misbehave on any other kind of a date, if they think they can get away with it. So, it all boils down to the individual and the kind of person he (or she) is.

I have two free leaflets on the subjects you mentioned. One is entitled, "How to Work Magic With Manners." The other is "Conversation Clues for Teen-Agers." If you would like to have them, just enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request for each leaflet and mail to me in care of TEEN, The Washington Star, Washington 3, D. C.

Dear Mrs. Ricker:

I am almost 17 and I have been dating a 17-year-old boy for quite a while. My parents are the best and they have provided many things at our house to amuse my friends. I have a ping pong table,



a place to play badminton, croquet and shuffleboard. Dad has a pool table and a pinball machine (it works without money) in our rumpus room which we can use.

My problem is this: There is so much we can do to have fun at my house, my boy friend never takes me anywhere. He comes over real often and last night he asked me to go steady. I would like to go steady with him if he would just take me out once in a while.

I think I am too young

to stay home all the time and I like to be around groups of people. Would it be all right for me to suggest that we go some place occasionally when we have a date? Or, do you believe he would think I was too forward?

LESLIE.

Your boy friend obviously enjoys spending evenings at your home but a boy of 17 should take his favorite girl out once in a while. Is there a possibility he just doesn't have any money to spend on dates? Or, do you think he may be stingy and is using

your home merely as a convenient parking place?

Whatever the reason, I think it would be all right for you to suggest going to a school event or movie some evening. If you know him well enough to consider going steady with him, you know him well enough to tell him you would like to get out and mix with other young people occasionally.

Considering your age, and the situation as you describe it, my advice is to avoid going steady with him, at least for the present.

Dear Mrs. Ricker:

I am 16. My problem is different from most teens but it is a real problem just the same. Whenever one of my teachers asks me to read or to say anything in front of the class I get nervous and my voice gets so shaky I can hardly speak.

I hate school because of this. I get the same way in front of close friends and even my family. Please, Mrs. Ricker, help me overcome this handicap. Thank you!

ELAINE.

Many well-known speakers, actresses and actors say that, after years of experience, they still feel jittery before

they face an audience. So, you see, your problem isn't so different after all, but any advice I give you will be of little value unless you make a real effort to help yourself.

You could start slowly to overcome your difficulties by reading out loud before members of your family. You could volunteer to teach a Sunday school class for small children. They will not be critical and it will help you to become accustomed to talking in front of others. It also will give you an excellent opportunity to learn a great deal about religion.

If it is possible for you to take a public speaking course in school, that would be helpful, too. In most of these classes there usually are several youngsters who are taking the course for the same reason you would be taking it—to overcome shyness. So, I am sure you would find sympathetic company in such a class. You see, Elaine, I believe the only way to solve a problem like yours is to keep working at it. Good luck!

(Letters to Mrs. Ricker can be answered through her column only. Write to Dorothy Ricker in care of TEEN, The Washington Star, Washington 3, D. C.)